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the loss of that pure and lofty spirit of unworldliness which is of the essence of the Kingdom of Heaven.

We have now pointed out in detail some of the more important and characteristic effects of the clerical office upon character. That this high office has other effects than those we have enumerated, we gladly acknowledge, but these last we believe to be most prominent where the claims of human brotherhood transcend the consciousness of class and privilege, and where the sense of official position is lost in the sacredness of human duty. The position of a clergyman gives him exceptional opportunities for high and holy thought as well as rare and innumerable chances for the doing of good. Many also are the men who are conscientiously availing themselves of these great *moral* privileges of their office, and to whom we may justly apply the words in which Chaucer described the parish priest of his own day :

“Christē’s love and hys Apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himselve.”

LANGDON C. STEWARDSON.

WORCESTER, MASS.

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT AND THE MORAL PROBLEM IN ITALY.

My colleague at the University of Naples, Professor Raffaele Mariano, in his article in the January number of the JOURNAL, has dissented from an opinion of mine concerning the historic problem of the influence of the Church of Rome and of the Papacy on the spirit and life of the Italian people. I wrote on this subject in the Review *La Nuova Antologia*,* and Professor Mariano replied to me in a lengthy address, delivered before the Academy of Moral Sciences in Naples, entitled “Is Catholic Italy Christian or Pagan?”

The point at issue in the discussion † was this : What impor-

* June 10 and July 1, 1891.

† Several Italian and foreign Reviews took part in it: among others, *La Revue Chrétienne*, September, 1891; *La Revue Suisse*, July, 1892; *London Spectator*, November 21, 1891.

tance does either of us attach to the value of that historic adaptation which has taken place in the religious and moral character of the people among whom the Papacy has arisen, and to the ethical quality of the social and political influences which it has exerted over them?

I cannot deny that the dominion of Rome, unquestioned for centuries, has had the effect of weakening the desire for an inward faith, such as the northern nations possess, and of dulling the conscience, and that it has given to the externals of religion an undue importance. Nor can it be forgotten that in proportion as the externals of faith and practice have grown in importance, and imaginative and theatrical forms and ceremonies have affected the deeper and more spiritual interpretations of Christianity, so in the life of the nation there has been a corresponding intellectual, moral, and social decay in the last two centuries, and the loss of those first original impulses by means of which, in the thirteenth century, it had obtained its place in history.

But, while I should recognize the Papacy as one of the factors in this decadence, I cannot, with Professor Mariano, consider it as the original and principal cause. For me "the chief cause of degeneracy of the Christian Spirit" is not to be found, as my colleague thinks, "in the Papal Church, in the nature of its maxims, of its dogmas, and in its method of regulating and governing the consciences of the people." * The religious and political tradition of the control of Catholic consciences, which for centuries has become more and more strengthened in the hands of the Roman Church, is to be considered a consequence rather than a cause,—a consequence of the trend of the entire history and life of the Italian people, a result of their manner of conceiving and understanding religious truths; just as the political structure and policy of the Papacy are both the work of our own minds and hands. In this respect our country has played the same part as it did in the history of intellectual development. The honor, which certainly belongs to it, of having been the vehicle by which,

* January number of this JOURNAL, p. 214.

during the Renaissance, the spirit of antique thought and art came into the possession of the other European nations, has been more than outbalanced by the baneful influence on our literature, especially our prose, of the constant imitation of antique models. So, too, the fact that we have lived in the very centre of the moral and civil organism and administration of the Catholic Church,—which may well be defined as a dictatorship of the conscience; the fact that we have impressed upon the Church, from the earliest epoch of the Middle Ages, the mental imprint of the Latin form, and, as it were, made it the heir of Roman instincts and traditions; the fact that we have thus converted the Church into a sort of continuation of the Roman imperium in the spiritual world,—all this has led us to introduce into the circle of our history and into the equilibrium of the forces of our national life an institution which, though founded upon it, has gravitated toward the outside, and has not been able since to identify itself with our political and civil interests.

I.

Taine, in his "History of English Literature," mentions among the chief causes that for centuries have prevented Italian unity and a permanent political adjustment "the cosmopolitan position of the Pope" (*la situation cosmopolite de son pape*), thus accepting an opinion of Machiavelli's which since his time has been shared by most of our political writers. Catholic Rome has been since its very beginning and is at the present time a power more political than spiritual, but its methods and its aims are not and never will be national, Italian aims. The historic fate which made it an institution essentially Italian in its origin and character, which, especially since the sixteenth century, has given it the central position of initiative and protection, inspiring to art and to our entire civilization, has resulted in rendering the moral and civil development of the Papacy inseparable from that of Italian life as a whole; whence came that identification of our life with the traditional spirit of Catholic Rome which has proved to our great disad-

vantage; to it being due our weakness, our internal conflicts and conquests by external foes.

Indeed, side by side with the splendors of the court of the humanistic and art-loving Popes of the seventeenth century, there appear, like dark shadows on a painting, all those historic causes which have sustained the hegemony of Catholicism solely by excluding us almost entirely from the current of secularization that is pervading modern thought and to which such an impulse was given by the Reformation. Humanism, with its return to Paganism (which did not in our case, as with the Germanic nations, find a corrective in a revival of Christianity), finds our minds and our culture in a very different position from that pure introspection of the human conscience to which Dante had returned, and by means of which the English drama and English lyrics and prose have attained their profoundly modern insight. The great reform of Trent, of which the Papacy was the animating spirit, and that reaction against Protestantism, whose vast historic proportions so astonished Macaulay, could not have been conceived and in great part completed by Italian minds without this result: that the force needed for repressing free inquiry and investigation should lead, as it actually did, to the stifling of the new philosophic thought that was just rising.

It may truly be said that the mind of the nation has been influenced by the menaces of the Inquisition in very much the same way as was Galileo. As in the case of Galileo—a prisoner and an abjurer—the philosopher became silenced, and only the scientist was allowed to speak; so in Italy also, since the burning of Bruno and the imprisoning of Campanella, we have, with the exception of Vico, heard only the experimentalist and the scholar. The moral sciences were stifled by the fatal atmosphere of the Roman reaction. It can be asserted that Italy has never had a modern philosophy of its own, as it has never had a philosophic prose. All its later literature during the past centuries reveals a lack of active, penetrating, original thought,—of thought that is truly modern and humane.

In this respect I am entirely in accord with the opinion of my friend Professor Mariano, namely, that the extreme

repression practised by the Church of Rome during the later period of our civilization has been fatal to the thought and the religious conscience of the Italians. But I do not concede that this degeneration and this approach to Paganism have been entirely, or in great part, the work of the Papacy. Nor can I agree that the loss in spontaneity and vitality, both in substance and in form, of most of our prose writers since the time of Boccaccio, must be attributed solely to the prevalence of humanism. For this phenomenon—so noteworthy in our literature that it may be considered to be its controlling influence—has its origin in the Italian nature itself, in its original disposition, which from its first manifestation in art has been inclined to return to the cultivation and imitation of what is classical and antique.

The same holds true of Italian religiosity. In its original form, that is, in the manner in which the nation has always conceived and represented the things of the moral and super-sensible world, it has reproduced those traits that were characteristic of the religious conscience of the classic nations, especially of the Latins. Instead of an ardent faith in the divine mystery of things and of life, this belief consisted in a complication of rites and practices representative of the social bonds and of the union of the citizen with his country; it was a function of public life, a habit consecrated by its legality.

And, in substance, such has remained the religion understood and practised by the majority of the Italians, especially those of the lower classes. It has always consisted principally in the ritual observance of that which constitutes the legal part of the religious code prescribed by the Roman Church; it has always laid and does still lay more stress in fact, if not in theory, on the merit and sanctification of acts and their public fulfilment, on the forms of social sanction, and hence on the office of the priest, than on the deep personal experience and inspirations of a faith which has its message for the soul alone. Of that austere spirituality, both moral and mystical, which was at the bottom of primitive Christianity, of its pessimistic conception of life and sin, and its expectation of a reign of God, the religious spirit of the Latins and Italians assim-

ilated only that which was least repugnant to their habits and hereditary disposition of mind and to their classical atavism, which led them to conceive of life and conduct with serene equanimity and a harmony of thought and sentiment in accord with their nature and social instincts and highly satisfying to their artistic tendencies.

Italian Christianity from its beginning, and during the Middle Ages, was penetrated by the essentially Latin tendency to seek the highest expression of faith and its true value in the unity of the social consensus and in the strong authoritative discipline of the creeds sanctioned by the Church. It is constantly tending to interpret the recondite moral significance of the evangelic ideals in such forms as to moderate their primitive mysticism and bring them within the province of art. It is far less subject to the eccentric influences of individuals and the heresies that rebel against the authority of Rome, than the Christianity of the French, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Germans. The religious spirit of the Italians, of which Calvin remarked to one of his friends that it could not be trusted, appears to us more Catholic and ecclesiastic than Christian, in the meaning correctly given to this term by the Reformers, who interpreted and explained the innermost moral significance of Christianity and its conception of life and the divine in a manner entirely divergent from our own, inspired as they were by the religious instincts of the Germanic race.

II.

This divergence was already foreshadowed by the two opposing factions, which inclined in opposite directions under the external unity of the theological system of Scholasticism; one side leaning to the mystics and heretics (the majority of these were Celts and Teutons), the other side upholding the dominion and the decisions of the Church (these for the greater part, from Anselm of Aosta to Thomas Aquinas, were Italians). This division tended, on the one hand, to spread among those holding the popular beliefs and doctrines the recognition of the advent of a faith which every believer must

make over to suit himself; or, on the other hand, to keep in check the multitude of minds and souls who were in powerful unanimity under the central authority of Rome.

Not that Italy did not also have its mystics and heretics. But they had only a small following, unless, like Arnold of Brescia, they became political agitators. They were the least mystical among the mystics, the most humanistic and most moderate of all the mediæval ascetics. The man who best represents the true type of mediæval Italian ascetics is Francis of Assisi. He was a great and holy artist, who carried out his reform in full accord with the Roman Church, who imparted to his propaganda a social impress of sympathy for the aspirations and the moral life of the multitude, and who, by his deeply poetic sentiment for nature, gave a powerful impulse to Italian art. The excesses of mysticism among the Franciscans, that for a moment during the thirteenth century seemed to have a following among the populace of Tuscany, did not affect the great mass of the Italian people. With their good common sense and with that fine perception for reality, which led them in their communal institutions, in advance of all other European nations, to the forms of modern life, the Italians appreciated that in the historical evolution of Christianity the central trend of the tradition of Roman rule, derived as it was from exclusively Latin origin, represented something more compatible with their own disposition and state of society than any other kind of civilization.

That is the reason why, notwithstanding all the errors and faults of the Papal Court, the popular party in most of our communes, and especially in the most illustrious and most Italian of all—Florence—belonged to the Guelf party. The Italians have always deplored the harm done to their country and to religion by the luxury, the abuse of temporal power, the nepotism and political ambition of so many of the Popes. No other literature has among its great writers such a chorus of censors and satiric writers against the habits of the clergy as ours, from the time of Dante. But, notwithstanding all this, there has been for centuries a state of tacit complicity between the Roman Church and the religious and civil conscience of our

people, so that the Papacy has owed its permanence to a deeply-rooted hold over the conscience, having known instinctively how to meet its needs, having, in short, been able to understand and govern it in all particulars, even in its defects,—nay, rather by means of those very defects themselves.

III.

This is the true story of our religious history. It may be criticised with severity, but above all must it be studied and understood. Certain it is that as the spiritual ferment of charity and ardent faith—which through the efforts of the Franciscans had infused a new life into the Church—was destroyed, as the Church yielded and accommodated itself to whatever restricted idealism and sentiment among the people to a mechanical cult and an idolatry of pure forms, Rome lent its aid in bringing on that corruption by which the moral life of our country was exhausted while at the very height of its literary and artistic prosperity. But the influence of the Papacy is only one link in this chain of cause and effect, a link which presupposes many antecedents, of which the most important was this,—the historical and moral direction which the national character imparted to an institution growing out of it. We can, therefore, understand how closely connected are the acts of the Papacy with the entire development of this civilization, which, since the fourteenth century, has been gradually turning away from the moral basis of Christianity, and which has become an atavistic revival of classical pagan tradition and sensuality. The same historic necessity that at every critical moment in the development of art and letters called forth the protective support of Rome also induced the Papacy to take part in the humanistic movement, putting it morally and religiously in a direction widely diverging from that in which the reformers, already before Luther, had tended, in their desire to get their inspiration at the very fount of primitive Christianity.

That such a reform, initiated by some great effort of the people, would have been impossible with us, is demonstrated

by the fact that the spirit of religiosity seemed to be entirely exhausted at the very moment when it awoke in the nations of the North and in France. Our nation, which even during the Middle Ages, says Burckhardt, had remained "half antique," and as such had entered the thirteenth century, anticipating by two hundred years the rest of Europe in the Renaissance, had spent all its rich vitality in a precocious blossoming that shone out in wonderful forms, but which remained mere forms without any moral content. The value of the growing civilization of the Anglo-Saxons, the Dutch, and the Germans, lay above all in the spiritual inwardness of a faith which appealed to the heart. But with us Latins and Italians this religiosity has never prevailed. The Roman Church could not give us this, nor revive it when it was spent. The Papacy achieved the only religious and moral reform after that of Trent which was then possible to it, and which was consistent with the tradition and the historic evolution of the Latin people, and particularly our own. Amidst the sensuality and the corruption of the last two centuries, Rome has been the only spiritual and civil power which still emphasized some great ideals, which still gave some living impulse to the consciousness and culture of Italy.

IV.

By these and other considerations, rather hinted at than developed in my essay "Mystic and Pagan Italy," I have endeavored to trace a psychological history of the religious life of the Italians. Such a study belongs to the category, so pertinent to the modern spirit, which the JOURNAL OF ETHICS, with praiseworthy enterprise, has established. I believe that no other country at the present time has so great a moral obligation before it as Italy in the task of taking up *sine ira et studio* the historic study of its religious development, in order to deduce from an objective understanding of its hereditary disposition, its habits of mind, its moral strength and deficiency, the sound judgment for the solution of its present and future problems. Never did these seem so serious and threatening as at the present moment. Never were they, as now, subordi-

nate to a single dominant question,—namely, the direction and moral education of our people, in which religious sentiment and the Catholic Church may still take so large a part.

Except as a means of determining the importance of the Roman ecclesiastical question and our relations to the Papacy, the opinions of the leading classes of Italians are vague, uncertain, and negative, if not absolutely valueless. Never in the history of any political movement has the party that led and inspired the movement shown such profound indifference to the moral consequences affecting the spirit and life of an entire nation, and been so little prepared to measure and control them, and lead them to a high ideal of civil life.

Since the death of Cavour, whose watchword, "*libera Chiesa in libero Stato*," might be called a skilful expedient rather than a contribution toward a definite solution of the great problem of our relations with Rome, the entire ecclesiastical policy of the new *régime* has aimed at overturning the temporal authority of the Pope and combating and diminishing in every way its moral and religious power by revolutionary and sectarian means, always trying to destroy, without any high and true conception of what ought to be done for public morality and education. With the exception of some of our best statesmen, such as D'Azeglio, Ricasoli, and Minghetti, and two or three important authors, as Mamiani, Jacini, and Bonghi, the great majority of those who take part in Italian affairs have shown, in their attitude toward the Church and the Pope, but one disposition,—to live for the day only and let things take care of themselves. The great practical leaders of Parliamentarism have always put off for tomorrow the needs of a nation the traditional basis of whose moral and religious life they have completely undermined, without offering any new support to replace the old.

The evident impotence of all the political parties that have controlled the government, when brought face to face with the problem of a permanent economical and administrative adjustment, is now apparent to all, even the most sceptical. Besides, there is another difficulty conspicuous in our present problem : sooner or later, by the force of events, a traditional

form of government falls into weakness and discredit, and is not able to administer the affairs of a great nation, or to retain any hold on its intellectual and moral life, when the fact is that it has never identified itself with its highest and truest ideals.*

Such a state of things has come to pass in Italy. The mass of the people know the government only through its fiscal control, which imposes the heaviest taxes and puts down insurrection, but they never feel its directing and educating power, which is entirely lacking in any lofty conception. This applies chiefly to public education. The dangerous activity of sects and of enemies to civil order—permitted by a dishonest and licentious press and uncontrolled by the government—spreads among the people; the schools give an instruction without educational value and create in many minds unsatisfied needs and desires, impatience and profound discontent. Furthermore, the condition of public education has been unsatisfactory since the beginning of the present government, because the financial position of the teachers has not been so provided for as to assure them proper respect and to allow them to devote themselves without anxiety to their noble calling. If the greater part of the millions which have been squandered on useless public works, imposed upon the government by intriguing deputies who wished to ingratiate themselves with their electors, had been expended on schools, then popular education would at least have had an assured foundation on which something solid could be built.

The moral education which the people most need should come to them as a directing impulse from the culture of the

* This was seen in the conduct of the government in 1878 in a case of no great importance in itself, but of great moral significance. In the religious movement initiated by the popular Tuscan prophet David Lazzaretti of Arcidosso, while at the head of a faithful band, among whom were many women and children, he, with some of his followers, ceased to be a carbineer and marched to Monte Labbro singing psalms and litanies. The government by its barbarous repression showed its inability to comprehend and deal with such a phenomenon. The writer has given a full account of it in his book "*David Lazzaretti di Arcidosso, i suoi seguaci, la sua leggenda.*" Bologna: Zanichelli, 1885.

highest classes of the country and by means of secondary and higher education. For, though we are not wanting in men equal in spirit and deep erudition to the best of any nation, we suffer from the lack of that high ideal view which, according to Goethe, is needed to render science living and real. In no other country are there so few men devoted to the moral and philosophic sciences, the study of ethical, pedagogical, and religious problems, and of all that is above purely material ends. And they encounter indifference and the contemptuous smile of those who believe (and there are many of them, especially among scientists, scholars, and economists) that the trend of modern thought is essentially materialistic and excludes as useless all considerations of the ultimate problems of the conscience. This sceptical and anti-philosophical attitude, which reduces natural science to the level of empiricism, and regards the moral sciences as an arid and fruitless erudition, solely for the search of material facts and historic dates, is common to almost all those who control reform and public education. Very few of them have succeeded in getting rid of the influence of the Jacobin and partisan views which pervaded their early education or of that rhetorical kind of thinking which half a century ago was, and which to a great degree still is, among the worst of the intellectual vices of the Italian liberal party, and which has hitherto prevented any conception of a social, moral, and political policy that looks to the true education and regeneration of the lower classes. This narrow view is particularly harmful to the literary and philosophical departments in our universities. Instead of inspiring the students with a desire for higher culture and ideal aims, it makes them only dry scholars who gather up critical minutiae—mere philologists and grammarians, teachers in gymnasia and lyceums.

V.

In this condition of affairs, when the moral problem is the most imperative of all, there is forced upon all those who view it objectively, and who feel that the life of our country cannot afford to lose any vital force, a recognition of the part

played by social action, which may be considered as within the province of the religious sentiment and hence of the Church and the Papacy. I believe with those who think that the regeneration of the popular conscience and of Italian life cannot be accomplished without harmonizing the modern spirit with the moral traditions of Christianity, existing in that historic form which has been adopted among the Latin-Catholic people, but which, indeed, must be purified and constantly elevated and enlarged by a high rational conception of all human duties.

Morality, to be sure, has a basis of its own in the conscience and sentiments of social man, and its evolution causes it gradually to cast aside the letter of religious tradition and dominion and to become one of the most potent factors in the development of this tradition. But, if it is true that such an independent morality, entirely without any positive forms of religion, can actually suffice to control the conduct of some men, it is nevertheless absurd and quixotic to believe that in the present condition of the most advanced nations, and especially in the case of the Italian conscience, there could be any true moral balance when morality is upheld by a support so different from and opposed to that which has been given by an old and still powerful religious tradition, which is so closely interwoven with the history of art and civilization.

On the other hand, the Gospel remains to-day, as Goethe has said, the most elevated and advanced product of the human conscience. Its precepts, inculcating charity and love of one's neighbor, can still be of greater social influence than any teaching inspired by the scientific conception of the struggle for existence. The only great power in Christian society that has been able to resist the dissolving spirit of criticism is Catholicism, which is daily gaining in strength, both in Europe and in America. Whether this is an evil or a gain may be discussed from an historical or a philosophic point of view, but the impartial observer, the political student above all, should recognize the fact. The Church and the Papacy are still, in spite of growing religious indifference, the most important political and moral factors with which the State has to deal, and which it must take into account, especially in

view of any national danger. To believe, as many do in Italy, that one can afford to ignore this power and leave it out in calculating the possibilities of the future; not to understand that by injuring and diminishing it one weakens the available moral force of which the State has so little to spare; not to recognize that by its very origin and the spirit of the Gospel the Papacy enters into all social questions, while the Borghese State remains outside, is truly a deplorable lack of political wisdom. Such a method of governing has had the following result,—namely, while the reputation and moral power of the Italian State have been growing less during the last twenty to thirty years, the Papacy has been growing stronger. Only a few days ago, during the popular excitement produced by the rising of the agrarian community in Sicily, the *Tribuna* of Rome, a journal that cannot be called conservative, turned to the clergy, asking why they did not use their authority to control the people. The clergy, who until now have been called enemies of the country by politicians of all parties, might well shrug their shoulders and say, “As you have sown, so may you reap.”

The remedy, if there be one, could come only from some great moral initiative, by which the State and our leading classes might have an opportunity of looking beyond the narrow boundary of parliamentary and partisan politics into the true life of the nation, and of coming to understand that they must not diminish nor antagonize any moral forces therein, but must support them all within the limit of the laws. Certainly it would be folly, or worse even, to admit the possibility of a restoration of the Pope's temporal power, as, indeed, it would be a mistake to believe that the State could ever give support to any religious movement hostile to Rome. But between reaction on the one hand and dangerous innovations on the other there always remains one way open, by which the moral interest of our political classes in the education of the people might be developed in a manner not favorable, but at the same time not hostile, to the religious traditions; by respecting that superior part of it which is still alive and progressive; by giving it liberty to develop in harmony with

popular instruction and modern culture, and by more and more imbuing the power it possesses over the minds of the people with the moral basis and educative spirit of the Gospel.

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THE LIMITS OF CASUISTRY.*

THERE is a school of moral philosophy which maintains that there is no way of scientifically determining what is the right thing to do. They are not intuitionists; they would resent the name. Strange to say, they are the very school which is most in the habit of appealing to reason as the source of moral judgments. The ordinary intuitionist one knows how to deal with. He condescends to argue. He tells us that moral rules are given us by intuition, and he is willing (though at times somewhat grudgingly) to tell us what these intuitions are. An opponent is then able to argue that the unconditional validity of these intuitions does not correspond with the actual moral judgments of a reasonable man, or that in so far as this validity is admissible it can be accounted for on some more general principle without the assumption of isolated and unconnected *a priori* deliverances of the moral consciousness.

But the neo-intuitional school represented by Mr. Bradley appears to maintain that moral judgments are so absolutely disconnected and unaccountable that they do not admit even of accurate statement or scientific analysis. There is no way of moralizing one's conduct except trusting to the spur of the moment, or (as Mr. Bradley would appear to suggest in his "Ethical Studies") asking an uneducated woman what she would advise. The effect of this new departure in ethics would appear to be to substitute what your President † has called unphilosophical for philosophical intuitionism. I call

* A paper read before the Cambridge Ethical Society, November 6, 1893.

† Professor Sidgwick.